

**BY:** Senator STEWART-COUSINS

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 2021, as Kinship Care Month in the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of issues that affect the lives of residents of New York State; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is moved to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 2021, as Kinship Care Month in the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Kinship Care Month is observed in September to recognize children in kinship families, and the grandparents, other relatives, and family friends who raise them, ensuring their safety, promoting their well-being, and establishing a stable household for these young people to thrive; and

**WHEREAS,** In kinship families, a caregiver cares for a child or children who were biologically born to another family member or close friend because the biological parents are unable to raise them; and

**WHEREAS,** Nationally, approximately 2.7 million children are living with grandparents and other relatives in kinship care; more than 195,000 of these young people reside in the State of New York, with fewer than 7,500 kinship children in foster care; and

**WHEREAS,** While grandparents provide more than 60% of all kinship care, aunts, uncles, adult siblings, other relatives, and family friends are also acting as parents for vulnerable children; and

**WHEREAS,** Many of these kinship caregivers give up their retirement years to assume parenting duties for children; and

**WHEREAS,** Many children come to live with kinship caregivers, after allegations of parental abuse or neglect; and

**WHEREAS,** Because of parental substance use disorders and other adverse childhood experiences, children in kinship care frequently have trauma-related conditions; and

**WHEREAS,** Kinship caregivers often cope with difficult family relations caused by parental addictions, incarcerations, mental illness and other unfortunate circumstance; and

**WHEREAS,** Kinship care homes offer a refuge for traumatized children; and

**WHEREAS,** Kinship care is a national resource that provides loving

homes for vulnerable at risk children; and

**WHEREAS**, One in 11 of all children, and one in five African-American children, will live within a kinship family sometime during their childhood; and

**WHEREAS**, Kinship caregivers reside in urban, rural and suburban households in every county of this great Empire State, stepping forward out of love and loyalty to care for their young relatives, offering much needed continuity and security, and providing the best opportunity to retain a child's cultural heritage and community ties; and

**WHEREAS**, The number of congregate care placements continues to decrease and child welfare agencies are increasingly reliant on kinship families; and

**WHEREAS**, Kinship caregivers are increasingly providing caring homes for children because of the opioid crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, The wisdom and compassion of kinship caregivers is a source of self-reliance and strength for countless children and for all New Yorkers; and

**WHEREAS**, Kinship Care Month honors the priceless role these grandparents and other kin play in the lives of the children they love; famous kinship caregivers include President George Washington; and

**WHEREAS**, Kinship Care Month also recognizes the accomplishment of countless youth throughout this great Empire State, and across the nation, who, with the unconditional support of grandparents and other relatives, have successfully navigated the emotional trauma of losing their parents; famous youth who were raised in kinship care include Maya Angelou, Sandra Day O'Connor, and President Barack Obama; and

**WHEREAS**, It is vitally important the public grow in awareness of the challenges faced by children, grandparents and other relatives in kinship families; partnerships among the education, legal, social services, mental health, justice, and other systems are necessary to ensure access to the services that can enable kinship youth to flourish in all facets of their life; and

**WHEREAS**, The entire community of New Yorkers expresses its wholehearted support for kinship caregivers in their task of providing loving homes for children; and

**WHEREAS**, Kinship Care Month is reflective of the values of family, community, and the welfare of children shared by citizens across New York State; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 2021, as Kinship Care Month in the State of New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of

New York.